Democrats Ask Further Probe On Kleindienst

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Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee pressed yesterday for an expansion of hearings concerning the nomination of Richard G. Kleindienst as Attorney General to include allegations of "improper interference" in federal investigations in Southern California.

Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.) formally asked Committee Chairman James O. Eastland (D-Miss.) to authorize extending the already protracted hearings to cover the substance of a Life magazine article this week.

Life contended that U.S. Attorney Harry Steward in San Diego, with the help of key California Republicans, had intervened to prevent a prosecution under the federal Corrupt Practices Act and that Kleindienst had later cleared Steward of any improper conduct.

Tunney cited the statements Tuesday of two former federal agents confirming the Life article and said that he also had "additional information" which raised "substantial questions" concerning Kleindienst and Steward.

A spokesman for Tunney later said the new information includes "documentary evidence" that lends weight to the charges.

The two former federal agents, Richard Huffman and A. David Stutz, have reportedly told Democrats on the Judiciary Committee that they are willing to testify.

Eastland said only that the matter would be considered by the full committee after a seven-man subcommittee returns next week from Denver, where it is to question Dita D. Beard, Washington lobbyist for the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp.

Mrs. Beard is the purported author of an ITT memorandum reported by syndicated columnist Jack Anderson, which linked settlement of three Justice Department antitrust cases against the conglomerate to ITT's pledge of at least $200,000 to bring the Republican National Convention to San Diego.

Republicans on the Judiciary Committee have made it clear they will push to close the ITT hearings if Mrs. Beard reaffirms her charge that the memo was a "forgery" and a "hoax."

Sen. Edward J. Gurney (R-Fla.), a member of the subcommittee traveling to Denver, predicted that if the memo proves to be false, the controversy will collapse.

But Tunney and other Democrats said they also want to learn why it took Mrs. Beard 18 days to deny the authenticity of the memo and under what circumstances her personal physician, Dr. Victor L. Liszka of Arlington, decided to appear before the committee.

Dr. Liszka told the committee that Mrs. Beard was sometimes "irrational" because of her heart condition and that she had told him she was "mad and disturbed" when she wrote the memorandum.

In the meantime, committee Democrats were preparing a new request for internal Justice Department documents, including some that bear on the Life magazine charges regarding Steward.

The Justice Department has previously provided some of the material requested by the Judiciary Committee, but denied access to other documents, including the file on settlement of the ITT cases.